

REFERENCES TO OTHER TOPICS

MDGs on Drinking Water

The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that more than 2 billion people have gained access to improved drinking water sources since 1990, according to the joint monitoring programme it is undertaking in conjunction with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), bringing to 89 percent the percentage of the world's population that are using such sources. This statistic is one percent higher than the 88 percent target expressed in 2000, as one element of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) No. 7. The report cautions that access to proper sanitation, another element of MDG-7, has not kept pace with the drinking water development and is still in need of attention. It also notes that the basic source of analytical data relied on – household surveys – is sometimes over-optimistic. See <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41488&Cr=mdg&Cr1=>.

ICJ: Judge Tomka Elected President

Following the UNGA's election of five judges to serve as new members of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the judges have elected Judge Peter Tomka (Slovakia) to serve as the President of the ICJ and Judge Bernardo Sepúlveda-Amor (Mexico) as Vice-President, each for a term of three years. For biographies of President Tomka and Vice-President Sepúlveda-Amor, see <http://www.icj-cij.org/court/index.php?p1=1&p2=2&p3=1>.

Armed Conflict and Treaties

The topical summary of debate in the 6th Committee of the UN's 66th General Assembly notes support for and opposition to the proposal that the International Law Commission elaborate a convention on the effects of armed conflicts on treaties based on the draft articles (see *EPL* 42(1): 2–8, at 4) noting that “[t]he next step would be to convene an international conference, once it had been seen that States were applying them in practice, and that the rules contained therein were widely accepted” (A/CN.4/650/Add.1). (ATL)

New Addition to UN Offices

With the relocation of the WHO's European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH) from Rome to Bonn, the German Government and the WHO have agreed that Germany will increase its financial assistance to WHO from €1.23 million to €3.4 million per annum (see <http://www.euro.who.int/en/who-we-are/who-european-centre-for-environment-and-health-eceh>). (ATL)

ITLOS: Seats its First Woman Judge

Judge Elsa Kelly (Argentina), elected at last year's Meeting of State Parties of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, has taken office to serve as ITLOS's first woman judge. For her biography and the biographies of newly elected Tribunal President, Judge Shunji Yanai (Japan), Vice-President Judge Albert Hoffmann (South Africa), and the other 18 judges in the Tribunal, see <http://www.itlos.org/index.php?id=96>.

International Protection of the Marine Environment

The 1995 Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Pollution (GPA) held its 3rd Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR-3) in Manila, Philippines. The objectives of the review extended beyond a review of the GPA's implementation, to also include planning for the period 2012–2015, identification of emerging issues, and preparation for the upcoming Rio+20 process. IGR-3 adopted a “Manila Declaration” which, along with the report of the meeting, is available online at http://www.gpa.depiweb.org/docman/cat_view/39-igr-3.html. The meeting was preceded by an important preliminary – the Global Conference on Land-Ocean Connections (GLOC) to provide input to the IGR-3. That Conference is reported by IISD online at <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/sd/ymbvol196num1e.pdf>.

New Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction

A recently released paper presents the most recent update of the substantive issues and the process of the draft UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), which will be presented for endorsement at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015. It is available online at http://www.unisdr.org/files/25129_towardsapost2015frameworkfordisaste.pdf. (ATL)

UNEP: GEO-5

The final draft of the 5th Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-5) “Summary for Policy Makers” was finalised in an intergovernmental meeting in Gwangju City, Republic of Korea. Designed like its predecessors as “a series of reports that informs environmental decision-making and endeavors to facilitate interaction between science and policy”, the summary of GEO-5 is available online at http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO5_SPM.asp.

CMS Agreements:**– Indian Ocean Sea Turtles**

The signatory States of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA) held their sixth meeting (SS6) in Bangkok, Thailand, to discuss a range of issues including proposals to establish a network of sites of importance to marine turtles, and to consider amending the MoU to become a formal agreement among its country-parties, in addition to organisational, financial and operational issues. The final report of the meeting will be posted at http://www.ioseaturtles.org/iosea_meeting.php?id=16. In the meantime, meeting documents and reports are available at that URL.

– Gorilla Conservation

The 2nd Meeting of Parties (MOP-2) of the CMS Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats was held in Bergen, Norway, although probably not with a goal of viewing local gorilla populations. This is the newest Agreement under CMS. Reports on the primary emphasis of the meeting – the status of the various populations of the species – are available at http://www.cms.int/species/gorillas/mop2/mtg_docs/mtg_docs.html.

– Bukhara Deer

The signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation and Restoration of the Bukhara Deer (*Cervus elaphus bactrianus*) held their first meeting in Bergen, Norway, to consider the implementation and status of the MoU and progress toward an action plan for its conservation. Already, the signatories were called upon to consider a proposal to expand the geographical scope of the MoU. View documents submitted to the meeting at http://www.cms.int/species/bukhara_deer/Meetings/1st_Mtg/BDK1_Docs_E.html.

EU:**– Emissions Trading Scheme**

With prices for CO₂ certificates dropping by about half over the last six months (to around €9 per metric ton), the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) has called for the Commission to withhold the “necessary” amount of ETS allowances in the next trading period from 2013–2020. The approved text, now before the European Council and Parliament, no longer mentions the amount of allowances, nor calls for a “significant” amount to be withdrawn. See EU press release at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201203/20120301ATT39773/20120301ATT39773EN.pdf>. (ATL)

– Next Environment Action Plan

The European Commission's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety has submitted its draft report on “the review of the 6th Environment Action Programme and the setting of priorities for the 7th Environment Action Programme – A better environment for a better life” to the European Parliament, where it awaits its first reading. The draft report proposes the following priorities (which it names the “3 i's”): “Implementation and strengthening”; “Integration”; and “International dimension”. See procedure file 2011/2194(INI) at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=COMPARL&mode=XML&language=E N&reference=PE478.523>.

Protection of Antarctic Waters

A coalition of environmental and conservation organisations has proposed the creation of a network of marine reserves, spanning 1.39 million square miles, to become “the world's largest network of marine reserves” in the Antarctic or “Southern

Ocean", citing numerous decisions, but little action, by international bodies such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (noting especially the non-transparency of meetings of the latter body). The coalition notes that Antarctic waters are the seasonal or permanent home to over 10,000 species including penguins, seals and whales. Reported at <http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/28/alliance-seeks-vast-marine-reserves-in-antarctic/>.

France: Subsidies and Biodiversity

The French Secretaries of State for Ecology and Planning have announced that "the State, on the basis of an audit, will review tax measures that are harmful to biodiversity and will propose new tools to allow a gradual transition to a tax regime that will be better suited to new environmental challenges". See "Report on Harmful Public Subsidies Towards Biodiversity" (Center for Strategic Analysis) at <http://www.strategie.gouv.fr/en/content/report-public-support-harmful-biodiversity>. (ATL)

Germany: Analysis of Approach to Food Security

A recent report of the Office for Technological Impact Assessment in the German Federal Parliament confirms that small-scale organic agriculture could provide solutions to the problem of food security and not the continued industrialisation of the agricultural sector or related genetic engineering. See "Possible

Contributions of Research to Solve the World Food Problem — Approaches, Strategies, Implementation". English summary and link to full report in German available at <http://www.tab-beim-bundestag.de/en/publications/reports/ab142.html>. (ATL)

Kazakhstan: Position on Arms Trade Treaty

In a letter dated 23 January, 2012 to the UN Secretary-General, the Republic of Kazakhstan, among other points, states its position that the international arms trade treaty should be legally binding and be expanded to cover not only conventional weapons but also individual and personal arms, such as rifles and pistols (A/66/672). (ATL)

USA: GM Crop Introductions

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced its plan to increase the rapidity of the regulatory review process for the introduction of genetically modified crops in the country. Checkbiotech.org reports that GMO approvals that formerly took approximately six months now take far longer due to "increased public interest, more legal challenges and the advent of national organic food standards", and suggests that the new rule making will aim to alleviate disadvantages caused by the delay. See http://greenbio.checkbiotech.org/news/genetically_modified_crops_get_faster_approval_usda_says.

(All references by TRY unless noted otherwise)



SELECTED DOCUMENTS

Freiburg Call for Action

Twenty years after the first Rio-Convention and forty years after the Stockholm UN-Conference we recognize a failure of this format of intergovernmental process to lead the world towards a just and sustainable future. We, as a group of 63 environmental laureates from 37 countries, represent evidence that solutions exist to the problems the world is facing.

We believe the challenge is to identify and build on the experience that already

* The Declaration on Rio+20 adopted by International Environmental Laureates on 10 March 2012, Freiburg, Germany. See page 116.

exists amongst the pioneers of change that this group of laureates represents. This should harness new communication concepts, promote continuous dialogues and be open to all members of society.

Our three day Convention in Freiburg calls upon the Rio+20-meeting to come up with actionable means to achieve sustainable development in the following critical areas:

- We urge governing bodies on all levels, as well as business and civil society, to become pioneers of change and successful social innovators.
- We have to move towards equitable

budgets per capita for energy, emissions, land use, water and resources.

- To be sustainable, economic development must reduce overconsumption, be based on an ethical and fair financial system, eradicate poverty, and be in harmony with nature.
- Sustainable Development is a key security issue for all nations and has to be treated and funded as such.

The environmental laureates present at this convention pledge to convene annually in Freiburg to monitor the progress in these areas, and to draw attention to positive examples of change in order to accelerate the innovation process.



UNCCD / COP-10

Decision 20

Measures to Enable the [UNCCD] to Become a Global Authority on Scientific and Technical Knowledge Pertaining to Desertification/Land Degradation and Mitigation of the Effects of Drought

The Conference of the Parties,

Bearing in mind the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) contained in the annex to decision 3/COP.8 and, in particular, the implementation framework of the Committee on Science and Technology,

* See page 87.

Acknowledging the need to mobilize scientific and technical expertise to address the problems of desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought,

Recognizing the work undertaken by the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology with the support of the UNCCD secretariat in the assessment of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice,

Having reviewed documents ICCD/COP(10)/CST/6 and the four options presented therein, as well as ICCD/COP(10)/CST/MISC.1,

1. **Requests** the Committee on Science and Technology to plan both long-term and short-term measures to enable the UNCCD to provide scientific support in pursuit of

operational objective 3 of The Strategy (to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought);

2. **Decides** to set up an ad hoc working group, taking into consideration regional balance, to further discuss the options for the provision of scientific advice focusing on desertification, land degradation and drought issues, taking into account the regional approach of the UNCCD;

3. **Invites** developed country Parties, national, regional and international organizations and relevant stakeholders to make voluntary contributions to support the ad hoc working group.

3rd plenary meeting, 14 October 2011

